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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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A-ONE #0247 11/24/00

~ STEEM: STE Emulator! ~ People Are Talking! ~ Vision 4 Released!
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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

I’m sitting down slowly....unbuckling belt....BURP!! Ahhhh, I feel somewhat better now! It’s the day after Thanksgiving here, and I still have plenty of leftovers to devour! Unlike last year, we had our turkey feast here at home - just my wife and I, and the two four-legged kids. We all ate like royalty! I may be "paying" for it now, but that certainly won’t stop me from going back for more! Can you tell I really enjoy this holiday?!

Our new web site is picking up steam. Thanks to Joe and Rob for doing all the work to get the site going! We want you all to stop by, take a look, drop us a line with comments and suggestions. Keep tuned as we continue to grow. The address is: http://www.atarinews.org . We’re CAB compliant, too!

Now, if I can just sneak downstairs and grab another piece of pie without the dogs seeing me!

Until next time...

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VISION 4.0 Released

The graphic image manager VISION is now available in version 4.0 and has some new features like an image browser, and now you can develop you own modules.

http://www.multimania.com/jlusetti/indexe.htm

Steem v1.2 ST Emulator Released

A new version of the STE emulator Steem has been released. Here is a list of fixes and new features:

MIDI in and out (experimental).
Printer out (requires an ST compatible printer).
Custom disk images, up to 2.3Mb!
Easy import of WinSTon favourites.
Rapid creation of multiple shortcuts.
Overscans improved - will always happen if needed.

DMA sound made safe for all sound cards.
ENTER and keypad / are now different from RETURN and /? (Damocles).
Fixed a few IKBD bugs (Chubby Gristle, The Pink Panther).
Fixed a minor Timer B bug (Hot Rubber, Batman titles).
Turn hard drives off without losing the path.
Auto update - Can download a new version when available if you want it to.
Speeded up the Disk Manager generally and added an option to speed up displaying folders with many ZIPs.

http://steem.atari.org

Tetrax 1.00 Released

Tetrax 1.00 has been released. Tetrax is a MOD player that uses the XBIOS for sound replay. So Tetrax also works on Milan, Hades, MagicPC and with MagicMac! You just need the right sound hardware (like Milanblaster) and a XBIOS compatible driver.

http://www.atari-computer.de/thothy/tetrax_e.html

a8jdpeg JPG Viewer Released

Raphael Espino has created a JPG viewer for the Atari 8-bits.

He writes:

I've uploaded the latest version of the jpeg viewer to my webpage now:

http://www.geocities.com/rjespino/atari.html

This version is faster, adds new display modes, and fixes a few bugs. It is a big improvement over the previous version. The source code for both the decoder and the viewer are also available, this makes it possible for others to write their own viewers.

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well here I sit, holding my stomach and wondering exactly why it is that I over-indulge in every Thanksgiving Day feast. Even though I KNOW that I'm going to suffer, I eat far too much of everything. Well, I'm too bloated at the moment to deal with deep philosophical questions. I guess I'll have to think about it some more after all the leftovers are gone. <grin>

On to another subject: The Presidential Election. If nothing else, the situation has given us a look into what our system really is and what's important about it. Even after the tally is completed and we have a winner, people (scholars and we 'common' people) will be discussing and debating it for quite a while. The only down-side that I can see to this whole affair is that it has taken the spotlight off of other issues such as reform of campaign contributions. Perhaps the heightened awareness of the way the American system of government works will be worth all the fuss, but perhaps it will simply expose other weaknesses that candidates will seek to exploit the next time around. Well, such is our system of government. You know, it continually amazes me that our founding fathers knew, more than two centuries ago, that values and mores would change, and that they made provisions to accommodate this. That's why The Constitution is the way it is.... There are a few 'Truths we hold to be self-evident', and provisions made to add more as we stumble upon additions to the list. The Founding Fathers knew that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were the big ones, and that those three might come to mean slightly different things somewhere down the road, so they made it possible for us to expand their meanings through the addition of amendments. It's an amazingly open-ended document which, if we treat it (and ourselves) with the respect and understanding necessary, should serve us well for a long time to come.

If you happen to be a citizen of a country other than The United States, please understand that I'm not necessarily placing the mores and values above those of any other country, just marveling at the foresight and the understanding of those men two centuries ago.

Next subject? Our new website. www.atarinews.org has received generally good reviews from those who have visited since our announcement last week. Even though the site makes use of some pretty advanced programming, CAB users haven't had a problem accessing it or any of it's options. Even though most users access the site with a PC or Mac, it's important to us that a user be able to access it easily using one of the machines that the site is dedicated to.

In the next couple of days we'll be publicly asking for readers to submit URLs for their Atari related sites. Several people have done so already but, being the greedy guy that I am, I want more! <grin>

Please feel free to post questions, observations, and feedback on the site. And don't forget to vote in the A-ONE survey. This week's survey is "What was the worst moment in Atari history?".

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips, and info available every week on the UseNet...

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Richard Kilpatric tells us about his new Falcon:

"Well, with thanks to Pete (and the wondrous Amtrak, who are always quick), I woke up to a Falcon030 being delivered!

I've fitted the FPU, which took little time but I can understand how

someone might crack a PCB if they didn't line it up very carefully. Don't know how to test it, but everything still works ;) The internal speaker is very silent, though, and I did reconnect it properly (wasn't working before, either, so I don't know if there's a utility disabling it as the jack socket is providing sound).

A couple of things are confusing me, as an ST user. One, I can't find out where to set the time and date, and I'm baffled as to how the Falcon is remembering it - they must have a proper clock. Two, everything seems to crash a lot. I'm running MagiC 5, with Thing 1.27. Don't really understand how the OS is working, to be honest.

Must happiness in the Electronic Cow software, which is loading and working, and just wondering if I should delete all the internet software since I doubt I'll ever connect the Falcon to the net.

The main thing I'm confused by is how to load and use Falcon demos. They request things like 'ST Compatibility' mode, and seem very happy to completely trash the OS, not work at all (68000 exception) or mess up the screen display.

What's the best freeware/shareware sequencer to use? I've been using TigerCub on the STE, which is basic but very easy to just sit down and use.

Finally, why on earth didn't Atari make STs to the same standard! The Falcon's case feels better made, clips together slightly as well as being held by screws, and the whole system feels more substantial.

It reports TOS version 4.00, with a date somewhere in 1996. I was told this is actually TOS 4.06 (or at any rate, not the original Falcon TOS)."

Shiuming Lai tells Richard:

"[For testing the FPU] Try GEMBENCH - just don't pay too much attention to the results. It'll crash on the Float Math test if the FPU isn't working properly for whatever reason.

Bah, chuck it [the internal speaker] in the bin, that useless bit of tin.

The Falcon's real time clock chip has a built-in battery. You generally set the date and time same as the ST, by using the Control Panel. On the Falcon (and MSTE/TT) the standard Atari utility is XCONTROL."

Derryck Croker adds:

"Clock and other settings are held in NVRAM. There are a few NVRAM setting progs around for the fiddly stuff in there, but for simple time setting you can use something like ZControl."

Claes Holmerup adds his thoughts:

"All programs don't work with MagiC - so if a program crashes, try in normal TOS instead...

Most demos require the crappy interlace video settings - and those can only be used with a TV or an RGB monitor (not SVGA).

The case is in fact exactly the same - as is the keyboard. The only (!) difference is the color...
It probably feels better because the case hasn’t been opened too many times... ;)

TOS version 4.00?
Ditch it and go for 4.04 instead (which was the last version ever for the Falcon)! If it says 4.00, then it IS 4.00 - and not something else, regardless of what someone might have said somewhere...

Some of the older versions have a really nasty bug: If you fill up your C: partition on the harddisk, the FAT of the D: partition will be destroyed! I believe this bug was with us until TOS 4.02 on the Falcon."

Lyndon Amsdon tells Richard:

"Under Magic my TOS version is 2.00 so it seems to take the first number only.

Why people use Magic? I use it as it’s fast, pretty bug free, and finally I can multitask.
I don’t use Mint as it needs memory, speed and more hard work.

The reason why you say Magic is buggy as your running it on a Falcon. If I remember correctly, v5 was the first release to work (well try) on a Falcon. Latest version is, most obviously, the best to date and you’ll find it’ll work a lot better than yours."

Lyndon Amsdon asks for info on CD burners:

"I’m intending to buy a CD recorder. I’ve been doing some research on software, and come up with Anodyne’s CD Writer/Backup.

The two reviews in AC state you need Extendos 3.x. Is it possible to stick with my copy of Spin 0.34, anyone tried it?

Also is the ICD Link (date of around ’92) which I have just bought, capable of working with new CD recorders? I have a feeling it was just ICD tools that was a bit dodgy.

I only have 8 partitions, each of 202 mb of size. Obviously this is not large enough to store a whole image of a CD, so is it possible to do CD to CD as I already have a IDE CDROM linked up to a TUS IDEal interface.

Can audio CD’s be done in chunks, is that what sessions are?

What’s the top speed a 8mhz STe can burn a CD. Probably 1x or 2x right? I just need to find an old (ish) burner as a new 12x or 16x speed one is useless to me."

Shiuming Lai tells Lyndon:

"CD Writer/Backup is a good choice - it’s easy to use and its author is very helpful and quick to do bug fixes.

[The software] use[s] specific features of ExtenDOS 3.x - hence the free download patch for existing ExtenDOS 3.0 users."

Lonny Pursell asks about problems with his Hades 060:

"Having finally gotten the parts to assemble my Hades060 the SONY floppy drive I ordered doesn't work. It just hangs the system at boot time and it has no configuration jumpers whatsoever. I swapped it out with an old floppy drive from a spare TT and presto the Hades boots.

I assume the SONY floppy is fine, but the hades doesn't like it for some reason.

Can anyone with Hades possibly tell me what make and model of floppy I might purchase? I hate to buy another and have it not work like the SONY one."

Derryck Croker tells Lonny:

"That must have caused an anxious moment...

A Hades AND a spare TT?? <smile>

Anyway, you could grab the file from Hallvard Tangeraas' (sp) page which describes how to jumper a Sony drive for an ST."

Jim Logan adds:

"I think my Hades (bought as a Direct60) came with a Fujitsu. I don't remember if the original is still there or if it had to be changed. I don't want to open the box unless I have to.

There may well be solder pads on the Sony if there aren't jumpers. The Hades floppy should be 0, the pc's, I think, is 1. Can anyone confirm?

Any standard 1.44 Mb floppy should do if you can set the drive number."

Lyndon Amsden adds:

"Right then time to mod your floppy drive!

I've had quite a bit of experience getting a 1.44 to work on STs. Firstly drives sold are set up for a PC.

They use ID number 1 which is stupid, and Ataris and a lot of other non PCs I've seen use ID 0.

So if there is no jumpers on the back, like most new floppy drives I've seen, there should be some little solder pads on the drives PCB. Quite often the PCB is covered my metal, so you can't damage it, but there are usually holes in the metal and they let you access the solder pads. They might be marked as "1" and "0" or "DS1" and "DS0", they both mean the same. If I remember correctly, DS means disc select.

You'll need to remove the solder bridging pad 0 and put a little bit of solder across pad 1.

If your still having problems finding the pads, as it can be difficult, they're usually situated near the floppy connector. Follow the traces from pins 12 and 10. Pin 10 is DS0 and pin 12 is DS1.

Those pins will lead you to the solder pads."

Jim Logan tells Lyndon:

"..."You'll need to remove the solder bridging pad 0 and put a little bit of solder across pad 1." ???

I would have thought that should be the other way round."

Lyndon tells Jim:

"Ahh gawd. I don't know what I was thinking! Too many late nights I say. Thanks JI for pointing that out.

Remove the solder bridge from pad 1 and put it on pad 0!"

Frank Lockwood asks for help connecting his TT to the internet:

"For the last few years I have been successfully connecting my TT to my ISP using a couple of telephone modems, with STing.

Starting in the spring, I began to have trouble initializing the connection with my US Robotics 56 k modem. It would dial up alright, and the modems would do their handshaking routine, and the connection would be established, but then once the "Initializing Connection" dialog appeared, nothing would happen.

At first this only happened occasionally, but it became more and more frequent, until at this point I cannot connect with my 56 k modem. When I use the 56 k modem with my Macintosh, it works just fine. I attached an older 14.4 k modem to my TT and it has worked reliably for the last couple of months, but now I am beginning to experience the same connecting failures with this modem.

I have re-installed Sting (several versions, several times), I tried STik, I've phoned my ISP and they assure me that they have made no major changes in the last year (and of course, they have no idea what to suggest for an Atari user).

I am at my wits end. I could provide someone with copies of my DIAL.SCR and DEFAULT.CFG files, as well as the logs generated by both Sting and STik when I fail to make a connection.

Is anyone willing to help - before I can no longer connect to the internet?"

'Keeper of the Flame', Tom Andrews tells Frank:

"I had the same problem with STinG 1.22 (Dialer 1.16) when I started connecting to the Internet a little under a year ago with my TOS 2.06 Mega ST4 and AT&T Dataport 14.4 modem. STinG 1.22 is the only version I've used, so I can't guarantee my solution will work for you, but here goes:

Call up the dialer and hit the 'configuration' button. Move to the 'Addressing' screen and remove the x from the box labeled, "Request Name Servers from Remote." SAVE this configuration.

That's all I did, and it hasn't failed to initialize a connection since. Don't ask why I tried that, because I don't really know. (I didn't have ST-Guide, so I couldn't read the docs. I was fumbling around blind) It

seemed to me that the dialer was waiting for something it either wasn’t going to get, or already had and missed. I eliminated the only thing I could find that it might be waiting for.

What can I say - it worked..."

"Mark" asks:

"How easy is it to upgrade TOS on a 1040ste? Is it expensive?"

Guillaume Letetu tells Mark:

"You may use a tos loader with a Tos image file, downloadable from the net. I personally use one with Tos 2.06 with my 1040 Ste (installed in AUTO directory of my hard disc). Works fine ...
If you are interested in this solution I can send you back the files I use."

Michael Schwingen tells Guillaume:

"[This] Works fine, but it is illegal unless you own an original TOS 2.06 (in which case it is easier to plug the 2 EPROMs into the machine and save the loader and the used RAM)."

Well folks, that’s it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - Import Taxes for PSX2? "Blade"! WWF Smackdown! Tom and Jerry! Spiderman! Sky Odyssey! And much more!

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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Import Taxes Mulled for PlayStation

Is Sony’s new PlayStation 2 a video game player or a computer? It’s more than just a marketing question: The answer is costing the Japanese electronics maker millions in import taxes ahead of this week’s European launch.

The hot new consoles hit the shelves across Europe on Friday after setting off a scramble among early Christmas shoppers in the United States last month.

Equipped with a 128-bit microprocessor, a DVD player and an ability to connect to the Internet, Sony believes the new units have grown up enough from the first PlayStations to qualify as a computer.

But the customs office in Britain, where Sony Computer Entertainment Europe is based, rejected that argument and put the PlayStation 2 in the same video games category as the originals.

That means each unit is subject to a duty of 2.2 percent, or roughly $9, when imported for sale in the European Union. Products classified as ‘‘digital processing units" - i.e. computers - don’t have to pay any import tax.

Sony spokeswoman Liz Ashford said Wednesday the company is appealing the decision in London by asking for a departmental review. If that fails, the company may file suit.

EU Commission spokesman Jonathan Todd said the EU established the rules for ‘‘computers used basically for games" earlier this year when confronted with Sony rival Sega’s similarly souped-up Dreamcast console.

The Playstation 2 decision ‘‘is in line with the Commission’s classification rules," he said, adding that Sony was free to challenge the ruling in court.

In the meantime, Ashford said, Sony is absorbing the cost of the tariffs rather than passing it on to European consumers, who already will pay a hefty premium over U.S. video game addicts.

The same PlayStation 2 that retails for $299 in the United States is priced at 299 pounds ($425) in Britain, 2,990 francs ($385) in France and 869 marks ($375) in Germany.

Sony is still facing supply shortages that made the PlayStation 2 scarce at its U.S. debut a month ago, but Ashford said the company has not changed its forecast of selling 3 million units in Europe by the end of the company’s fiscal year in March.

Here Comes The Spider-Man ...

Activision’s Spider-Man for the Nintendo 64 Swings Into North American Retail Shelves

Activision, Inc.’s highly acclaimed 3-D action/adventure game, Spider-Man, will swing onto the Nintendo 64 the week of November 20, 2000. Marvel’s renowned wall-crawler will deliver his signature spider sense and swift action to retail shelves across the United States and Canada. Spider-Man for the Nintendo 64 has been rated ‘‘E" (‘‘Everyone" -- content suitable for persons ages six and older -- with Animated Violence) by the ESRB and carries a suggested retail price of $49.99.

Based on one of the most recognized super heroes of all time, Spider-Man

challenges players to employ all of their Spidey skills including web-slinging, wall-crawling and agility as they gather information and battle against seven notorious bosses. Gamers must utilize Spider-Man’s super strength and superior wit to protect the innocent as they solve a variety of puzzles and defeat old and new super villains.

‘‘This is the first video game that lets N64 players live the fantasy of being Spider-Man as they wall-crawl and web-sling anywhere in a free-roaming 3D New York City," states Dave Stohl, executive producer, Activision Studios. ‘‘The game’s unique action system allows players to experience ultra fluid movements as they fight villains and infiltrate laboratories attempting to uncover a sinister plot that threatens to overtake Manhattan."

Developed by Edge of Reality, Spider-Man for the Nintendo 64 features an original storyline that gamers can experience through 34 action-packed levels. From hair-raising police chases and all-out brawls with lizard men to stealth missions, gamers battle through familiar Spider-Man comic book locales including the Daily Bugle, Times Square and a New York bank. Players will utilize all of the classic Spider-Man web defenses from trapping and yanking to impact webbing, as well as new weapons including web doming and web spikes to battle enemies. In addition, players can swing from place-to-place, ambush enemies from above or below, crawl on buildings, ceilings, or walls, and use the always-handy ‘‘Spider-Sense" to detect danger from afar.

‘‘WWF SmackDown! 2: Know Your Role" Ships for PlayStation

THQ Inc. and JAKKS Pacific, Inc. announced the release of the latest World Wrestling Federation Entertainment licensed video game, ‘‘WWF SmackDown! 2: Know Your Role" for PlayStation. This eagerly anticipated title was developed by Yuke’s Co., Ltd., the makers of the top-selling original, ‘‘WWF SmackDown!".

‘‘As a follow up to the chart-topping success of ’WWF SmackDown!’, we are thrilled to be able to deliver ’WWF SmackDown! 2: Know Your Role,"’ stated Peter Dille, vice president of marketing, THQ. ‘‘It’s loaded with everything from Ladder Matches to all-new Double Team moves to one of the most intense experiences in all of sports entertainment - Hell in a Cell."

‘‘’WWF SmackDown! 2: Know Your Role’ is everything PlayStation and WWF enthusiasts have been waiting for," stated Stephen Berman, president and COO, JAKKS Pacific. ‘‘Combined with the World Wrestling Federation’s growing fan base, it’s bound to be another mega-hit."

‘‘WWF SmackDown! 2: Know Your Role" boasts expanded features including all new storylines and gameplay modes such as Ladder Matches, Hell in a Cell, Casket Matches, Tornado Tag Team Matches, and Special Tournaments. Players will have the opportunity to brawl not only in the ring, but also backstage, in the VIP room, in the parking lot, and even in the new World Wrestling Federation Entertainment complex in New York.

A new, up-to-date roster allows players to select from one of over 50 Superstars, including The Rock, Triple H and Chyna, each with their own signature moves. By using the enhanced Create-A-Superstar mode, players can build their own Superstars with customized characteristics including height and weight, physical appearance, personality, and detailed move selection.

Breathtaking graphics and effects such as lighting, shadows and skin textures, bring ‘‘WWF SmackDown! 2: Know Your Role" to life on PlayStation like never before.

Activision Launches Sky Odyssey - First Action-Adventure Flying Game for The PlayStation 2 Computer Entertainment System

The thrill of aerial flight invades North American retail shelves with the launch of Activision, Inc.’s Sky Odyssey, for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. The first action-adventure flying game designed for the new platform, Sky Odyssey delivers a high-impact flight experience in ultra-realistic, superbly detailed 3-D environments. The game carries a suggested retail price of $49.99 and has been rated ‘‘E" (Everyone -- content suitable for persons ages six and older) by the ESRB.

Sky Odyssey allows players to soar into the wild blue yonder and challenges them to earn their wings as they undertake over 40 action-packed missions, braving ever-changing environments and weather conditions. From the cockpit of over 10 different aircraft, gamers attempt to acquire the missing pieces of an ancient map that will allow them to locate their secret final destination.

‘‘Sky Odyssey thrills gamers with white-knuckle action from maneuvering through dangerous caverns to challenging rescues, putting their piloting skills to the ultimate test in the first flying game for the PlayStation 2," states Larry Goldberg, executive vice president, Activision Worldwide Studios. ‘‘The title also demonstrates the new platform’s impressive graphical capabilities with ultra-realistic weather effects like rain, snow and fog and virtually endless horizons."

Based on realistic aerodynamics, physics and gravity, Sky Odyssey challenges players to control their speed and altitude as they execute varied mission objectives such as landing on a moving train, flying through underground caverns and touching down on an aircraft carrier at sea. Players take control of a variety of aircraft, including the Swordfish Mark I biplane, the stealth fighter and the F4U Corsair, as they fly across massive 3D maps from tropical islands to perilous mountain peaks. The game rewards players for improving their flying skills by allowing them to fully customize the appearance of any aircraft and giving performance-enhancing upgrades to the three basic planes.

Adding to Sky Odyssey’s replay value are five different gameplay modes that allow virtual pilots to perfect their navigational skills -- Adventure Mode, Free Flight, Sky Canvas, Target Mode and Training Mode. In Sky Canvas Mode, players use a smoke generator to draw pictures in the sky, while in Target Mode they practice their accuracy by flying through targets suspended in the air.

Activision’s Blade Stakes Out North American Retail Shelves

Denizens of the night beware, Activision, Inc. has unleashed Marvel’s master vampire hunter, Blade, to the PlayStation game console and Game Boy Color. As a prequel to the Blade movie, the game lets players assume the

role of the day walker in an all-new vampire slaying rampage. Blade for the PlayStation is currently available at retail outlets nationwide at a suggested retail price of $39.99 and is rated ‘‘M" (Mature -- with Animated Blood and Gore and Animated Violence). Blade for Game Boy Color is available at retail outlets nationwide at a suggested retail price of $29.99 and is rated ‘‘T" (Teen -- with Animated Blood and Animated Violence).

‘‘The dark and foreboding atmosphere of the movie and the comic lends itself perfectly to a video game adaptation," said Marcus Iremonger, senior producer, Activision European Studios. ‘‘As the first games ever based on the property, the Blade titles remain true to their source with an incredible stories and unabashed over the top action."

Played from a third person perspective, Blade for the PlayStation game console immerses players in the macabre world of modern day vampire lore. Throughout the game’s 21 environments including the Gothic City Museum, City Sewers, Cargo Ship and Chinatown, players will face down 32 creature variants from the Vampire Ninjas to the giant Night Beast. To help slayers dispatch their prey, Blade features the ultimate arsenal to battle the undead including swords, guns with special silver tipped ammo, ultra-violet grenades and a variety of lethal hand-to-hand moves.

Players need not fear the night any longer, as Blade’s advanced auto-aim system ensures that combat is focused on reactions and weapon selection rather than pinpoint accuracy. Additionally, cinematic cut-scenes provide the player with options that will affect the path of the game for unique gameplay experiences.

Blade on Game Boy Color features seven thrilling levels of side scrolling mayhem. Gamers utilize three fighting styles as well as machine guns, shotguns, swords, ‘‘boomerang" blades, knives and throwing syringes while fighting 18 enemy types and seven bosses.

Blade was developed by HammerHead Ltd. for the PlayStation game console in conjunction with Activision. Blade for Game Boy Color was developed by HAL Corporation for Activision.

NewKidCo Announces Release of Tom and Jerry in: House Trap for the PlayStation Game Console

NewKidCo International Inc. announced the release of Tom and Jerry in: House Trap for the PlayStation game console. It is the ultimate game of cat and mouse as everyone’s favorite slapstick duo, Tom and Jerry, go head-to-head in hi-tech combat.

The eagerly awaited retail debut of Tom and Jerry in: House Trap coincides with NewKidCo’s release of Tom and Jerry in: Fists of Furry for the Nintendo 64, earlier this month. In December, the company will release Tom and Jerry in: Mouse Attacks for Game Boy Color.

‘‘With a rich depth of history that includes more than two hundred cartoons and seven Academy Awards, we are proud to bring Tom and Jerry to the PlayStation game console," said Henry Kaplan, Chief Executive Officer of NewKidCo. ‘‘Tom and Jerry continue to entertain and engage children of all ages."

In this frantic split-screen Tom and Jerry adventure, one player can play as Jerry and try to outwit that pesky cat, Tom. As Jerry, you will have to set traps, drop tacks, throw frying pans and unlock ironing boards all in an effort to defeat Tom once and for all. The split-screen display allows you to watch the results of your ‘‘trap-setting" techniques and also helps you keep track of your opponent’s whereabouts while you each run through the house! In two-player mode, you can play as Tom or Jerry, chasing each other all around the house or choose to stay in the same room and battle it out Tom and Jerry style. You will encounter household hi-jinx galore, running all over Tom and Jerry’s house as you play this frenzied escapade. Featuring one or two player modes with 15 different levels of play, gamers will delight playing solo as Jerry or against a friend joining in as Tom.

EA Games Rolls Out Exotic, High Performance Bond Vehicles for Hollywood Style Action in 007 Racing for the Playstation

Superspy wannabes with dreams of driving the exotic, gadget-filled cars of James Bond will get their chance with the release of 007 Racing for the PlayStation game console. This spy-packed action-driving game, published by Electronic Arts under the new EA GAMES brand, marks the first Bond game to exclusively immerse players behind the wheel of Q-Branch vehicles in an array of mission-based environments.

Adding to the game’s overall unique appeal is the original plot line that is inspired by the best, most memorable action scenes from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer’s (MGM) world-renowned James Bond franchise that has produced 19 memorable movies over the last 38 years.

In 007 Racing, a high ranking European diplomat and businessman plans to hijack a shipment of NATO weapons and smuggle them to international terrorists inside cars that roll off the assembly line of his automotive plants. As Bond, it is up to the player to stop him. Fortunately, the gamer is supplied with some of the most famous gadget-filled cars from the Bond universe to thwart the evil villain.

The game features 12 action-filled missions, inspired by memorable movie scenes, set in locations such as Eastern Europe, New York, Mexico and Louisiana. Each environment offers numerous and diverse action and stealth-based missions that the player must successfully complete in order to proceed. For example, in Estonia, the player must launch Stinger missiles from his Aston Martin DB5 to bring down a helicopter and then employ the standard oil slick generator to give pursuing jeeps ‘‘the slip".

Bond enthusiasts will experience what it feels like to drive the legendary Bond exotics BMW Z3, BMW Z8, BMW 750iL, Lotus Esprit, Aston Martin DB5 and Aston Martin Vantage. Each vehicle in the game will carry a full complement of Q-branch gadgets and weaponry as well as new weapons that will help the player overcome specific challenges of missions. The arsenal includes machine guns, rockets, surface-to-air missiles, laser cutters, an oil slick generator, smoke screen and bulletproof rear screen. The vehicles will also feature a physics model which accentuates 007’s no-holds barred driving style, and a progressive damage model that affects the look of the car and its performance. For example, a player who commits a twisting, somersault jump over a building in his Z8 at 100 mph and lands on the front bumper will see a resultant crumpled hood and lower top speed.

Staying true to the Bond universe, players will encounter recognizable henchmen such as Jaws as well as newly created villains for the game. Bond also will receive help from Bond allies of the past such as M, R, Q and his old CIA friend Jack Wade, each of whom will give the player tips and advice via audio and text to help achieve mission objectives. Actor/Comedian John Cleese, who plays R in the movie, ‘‘The World is Not Enough," lends his talent as the voice of R in the game.

Multiplayer for 007 Racing supports two-players and features two modes, Challenge and Pass the Bomb, each of which can be played in eight uniquely designed two-player levels. In Challenge mode, players battle with their friends to find the ultimate 007 Racer. In Pass the Bomb, players engage in a game of ‘‘tag" to pass a ticking bomb before it detonates.

007 Racing for the PlayStation supports Dual Shock. The game is rated ‘‘T" (Teen) and will ship with an MSRP of US $39.95.

Infogrames, Inc. Serves Up Beach Volleyball Fun With Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball - In Stores This Week

Infogrames, Inc. announced that it is shipping the ultimate beach volleyball experience this week. Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball for the PlayStation game console is heading to store shelves this week. In December, the Nintendo Game Boy Color version of the game will also be available.

Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball will feature more than 40 Federation of International Volleyball (FIVB) players competing on 14 courts around the world. Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball is the only beach volleyball game currently available for the PlayStation.

‘‘Wouldn’t we all love to find Gabby Reece and Sinjin Smith under our tree this holiday season?" said Laddie Ervin, director of marketing for sports & racing at Infogrames, Inc. ‘‘Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball’s licensed players and realistic gameplay capture the game of beach volleyball so well that gamers will think it’s already summer again!"

Developed by Paris-based Carapace, Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball is endorsed by volleyball manufacturer Mikasafi and offers authentic touches such as dink shots, flying sand and dynamic crowd reactions.

Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball’s licensed male and female volleyball players include Gabby Reece, Sinjin Smith, Carl Henkel, Liz Masakayan, Elaine Youngs and many more. Gamers can play as one of the FIVB players, or they can create their own beach pro using the Player Editor and choose to play against volleyball’s finest.

The 14 beach courts in Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball can be found in exotic locales including Sydney, Australia; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Marseilles, France; Los Angeles, USA; Osaka, Japan; Acapulco, Mexico and more.

In addition to an accurate visual representation of FIVB beach volleyball, Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball’s several game modes offer deep gameplay with one to four opponents playing at the same time in various configurations (using the Multi Tap):

-- One player mode, with the computer controlling the second player
-- Two player cooperative mode, with two human players against the artificial intelligence (AI)
-- Two player versus mode, in which each human is partnered by a computer
-- Three player mode, featuring a cooperative human team against a human-AI combination
-- Four player mode, two cooperative teams facing each-other

Players will be challenged with three different game modes. Practice mode lets players work on their volleyball skills on a special practice court. Exhibition mode is a simple match but can be played with any licensed player or a custom player on any court. The World Tour mode is the most complex mode of the game -- an FIVB season consisting of eight tournaments with 16 teams competing in a double elimination type draw.

Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball for the PlayStation and Game Boy Color will be available in most major retail stores at an estimated retail price of $29.99. Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball for the PlayStation will be available this week, while the Game Boy Color version ships to stores in mid-December. For more information visit the game’s official Web site at www.spikevb.com.

THQ Announces New Power Rangers Games for 2001

THQ Inc. and Saban Entertainment Inc. announced a new addition to the successful Power Rangers video game product line: ‘‘Power Rangers Time Force" for the PlayStation game console and Game Boy Color system.

The games will be based on the new Power Rangers television series, ‘‘Power Rangers Time Force", which begins airing early 2001. The action-packed adventure will send the popular fighting force traveling through time to stop evil from manipulating time. ‘‘Power Rangers Time Force" will be available for release in fall 2001.

Saban recently awarded THQ ‘‘Outstanding Licensee of the Year" at the 7th Annual Saban Summit as a result of the tremendous success of THQ’s first interactive entertainment releases, ‘‘Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue" for PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color.

‘‘THQ is honored to be recognized by Saban for our efforts with the Power Rangers franchise," stated Germaine Gioia, vice president, licensing, THQ. ‘‘The action-packed Power Rangers property has proven an ideal brand for the interactive entertainment category."

‘‘Fox Kids’ Power Rangers is the favorite of boys 2-11 in its timeslot, and according to the Nielsen Galaxy Report, Power Rangers is the number one kids show of the decade," stated Elie Dekel, president, Saban Consumer Products. ‘‘As ’Power Rangers Time Force’ begins airing on Fox Kids Network February 2001 with 52 all-new episodes throughout the year, the new PlayStation and Game Boy Color games will allow fans to interact with the team as they travel through time in their exciting adventures."

In ‘‘Power Rangers Time Force" for PlayStation, kids can play as a member of the elite ’Power Rangers Time Force’ team or as a powerful Megazord through multiple theme-based levels. The game offers players the opportunity to travel throughout numerous environments, including hidden

bonus levels, to stop evil criminals from manipulating the time line. ‘‘Power Rangers Time Force" will also be released for Game Boy Color.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Comdex Special Report

Another Fall Comdex has come and gone, leaving a trail of product announcements, keynote speeches and endless prognosticating about the computer industry’s future. Held November 13-17 in Las Vegas, the show drew more than 200,000 attendees and some 2,000 exhibitors, though Apple wasn’t among them. PDAs and wireless networking were big themes, but the show also served up its typical brew of cross-platform peripheral products, including displays, storage devices, printers and digital cameras.

Microsoft chairman Bill Gates set the tone Sunday evening with a keynote in which he demonstrated the company’s forthcoming Tablet PC. Gates also outlined Microsoft’s .Net initiative and held that "tablets and other hardware devices will require a fully featured operating system and suite of applications -- not the browser-based client espoused by many in the high-tech industry."

Oracle chairman (and Apple board member) Larry Ellison, the Monday keynoter, engaged in some heavy-duty Microsoft-bashing before his speech, telling reporters: "People are taking their apps off PCs and putting them on servers. The only things left on PCs are Office and games. You’re considered a dead company if you write applications for the PC."

"Larry’s been talking about ideas that have gone nowhere for years," countered Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer. "How long has he been talking about the NC? Six years, seven years? Where did it go? Nowhere."

Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina discussed a vision of the future in which useful technology is unseen. "We need to focus on technologies that allow people to easily interact and access information," she said. "This happens when making technology easy to use and reliable, so it fades to the background. Then people can concentrate on things that matter most to them; creating, completing tasks and achieving to their heart’s content." She pointed to an announcement that Nokia cell phones can link to HP printers to generate hard copies of Web content, and noted that HP printers can act as Web servers. However, she spoke just after the company issued a bleak fourth-quarter earnings report and announced that it ended discussions to acquire the consulting arm of PricewaterhouseCoopers. That news sparked a sell-off in HP stock.

Eastman Kodak CEO Daniel A. Carp highlighted future imaging products, including a camera with wireless connections, a 3-D graphics program and

a new display technology called Organic Light Emitting Diode (OLED) that offers better quality and lower power consumption than LCDs. Carp also showed a watermarking system designed to protect image ownership rights. Capable of withstanding image-processing and other tampering, the "smart" watermark can detect the unauthorized use of images. Describing photos as the "killer app" of the Internet, he predicted that Web-related digital-imaging products will grow into a $225 billion industry--more than all current photographic market segments combined--in the near future.

On the expo floor, graphics chip rivals ATI, Nvidia, 3dfx and 3Dlabs all vied for attention, and representatives of each company spoke to MacWEEK about the increasingly competitive market. ATI told staff writer David Read that the company hopes to take advantage of the modularity of its Radeon controller to move into new markets, including consumer electronics and embedded systems. Targeting the laptop market, the company said it has provided samples of a Radeon mobility controller to some customers, but would not reveal if Apple is one of them. ATI's Rage Mobility, based on the earlier Rage 128 technology, drives the graphics in Apple's PowerBook and iBook.

Nvidia announced the GeForce2Go--its first processor designed for mobile applications--and signalled that it intends to take away some of ATI's portable business. The two companies are in a dead heat in the overall market for graphics controllers, but Nvidia's strength is on the desktop, while ATI is stronger in mobile sales. 3Dlabs, whose processors are targeted at graphics professionals rather than gamers, told MacWEEK that Alias|Wavefront's decision to offer a Mac version of its Maya 3-D software makes the Mac a more-viable platform for 3Dlabs' accelerators.

3dfx, seeking to stem a tide of red ink, announced plans to sell its board-assembly facility in Juarez, Mexico and outsource future manufacturing to contractors. The company will continue to design and market its graphics boards, and will stick with its current Taiwan-based chip-manufacturing partner, although it held out the possibility of seeking alternative chip suppliers. The company has reported losses for the last two quarters, with its stock price taking a beating as well.

Comdex was billed as a coming-out party for handheld devices, and sure enough, Palm and its developer partners were busy. Palm announced MyPalm, an online service for wireless users, and began shipping its $39.95 Mobile Internet Kit, which provides wireless connections for some Palm organizer models. In its booth, Palm was talking up Secure Digital flash-memory technology, which it plans to incorporate into Palm models slated for release early next year. IS/Complete demonstrated Restrictor, which allows administrators to set up a secure Palm handheld for multiple users, and IrPrint, a printing utility. JungleSoft demonstrated a new color version of its Palm mapping service.

On the storage front, Iomega announced the Predator, a stylish CD-RW drive to be available in USB and FireWire versions; ei introduced the Q, a flash memory device that uses a keychain form factor; Microtech and SmartDisk announced new flash-memory card readers; SmartDisk and VST introduced external hard drives; Medea said it is shipping its VideoRaid fc and VideoRack fcx Fibre Channel RAID systems; and Mobility Electronics announced EasiExpansion T45, an expansion tower that adds four PCI slots, two IDE controllers and five drive bays to Power Mac G3 and G4 systems.

Sony, Viewsonic, Samsung and several other exhibitors used the show to

demonstrate new LCD and CRT displays, including a stylish line of USB-equipped Multiscan CRTs from Sony. MacWEEK also got a sneak peek of a forthcoming 23-inch LCD monitor from Viewsonic.

Numerous vendors showed new digital imaging products, the most interesting being an "Internet camera" from Ricoh that sports a built-in Web browser, and a still/video camera from Sanyo that features magneto-optical storage and a FireWire interface.

Longtime Mac developer Orange Micro announced three new USB 2.0 products: an $89 USB 2.0 hub; OrangeUSB, an $89 USB 2.0 PCI card that features four external and one internal port; and OrangeLink+, an $149 combination card configured with one internal and two external FireWire ports, along with one internal and three external USB 2.0 ports. All three are compatible with USB 1.1 devices, but when a USB 1.1 device is connected to a USB 2.0 port, the port will pull back from USB 2.0's top speed of 480Mbits per second to 1.1's 12Mbits per second. Orange Micro said it will ship its own USB 2.0 drivers until the Mac OS and Windows incorporate their own. Apple has not announced whether it plans to support USB 2.0.

Although it was a PC-oriented show, a few exhibitors demonstrated Mac software. German Linux developer SuSE announced that it is shipping SuSE Linux 7.0 for the PowerPC, a $50 distribution that features a large printed manual, more than 1,000 applications--including image processing software--and 60 days of installation support (See " SuSE Linux 7.0 for PowerPC ships.") And several developers unveiled Mac-based graphics software: ACD Systems' $29.99 ACDSee image-organizer; ArcSoft's $99 PhotoStudio photo-retouching software; and Binuscan's $1,000 PhotoRetouch Pro for professional graphics users.

Comdex, in addition to being a showcase for new computer products, is also a visual spectacle as hundreds of exhibitors compete for attention. You can see the festivities in MacWEEK's photo galleries from Day One, Day Two and Day Three.

On the eve of Comdex, Henry Norr of the San Francisco Chronicle assessed the state of information appliances--a big Comdex theme--observing that despite their limited market, they have "already carved out one important role: They give technology journalists and industry leaders something to rattle on about that is (or so we hope) more exciting than plain old PCs or even cell phones."

Norr also looked at Comdex itself, describing the genesis of producer Key3Media and the show's apparent comeback after several years of declining attendance. And he reported that powerline networking--the use of AC wiring and outlets to transmit data--could be moving from vaporware to real products from companies like Phonex Broadband and Power Line Networks.

Cecilia Kang and Therese Poletti of the San Jose Mercury News offered their own introduction to Comdex, noting that the event "has grown so large and diversified from its origins as a PC show that organizers have created separate showrooms and pavilions focusing on different technologies and audiences, such as Linux, networking, digital imaging and security."

Vnunet reported on a battle between Sun's Java and Microsoft's .Net strategy for the big server market. Tech folks from General Electric and FedEx explained that Java is a hit with their developers, but it's not

about emotions or bias. "If there is something Java can’t do well we would go with Microsoft," said one.

Angie Wagner and Bruce Meyerson of the Associated Press examined the Comdex culture, noting that "cell phone use was so heavy it took several tries to place or receive a call, only to lose the connection in mid-conversation." One exhibitor wrapped the MGM Grand with a 15,000-square-foot red vinyl banner to promote antivirus software. Another, Virtual Money, "passed out plastic cards offering a one-in-five chance to win up to $100 just for visiting the booth." And then there were the parties: "One spectacle, thrown by veteran computer services company EDS, featured musicians Macy Gray and Barenaked Ladies in an airplane hangar at McCarron Airport. And Xerox held a party at Stratosphere, a 1,100-foot tower overlooking the glittering Vegas strip."

Meyerson also looked at some of the gadgets introduced at the show, including National Semiconductor’s WebPAD and prototypes of forthcoming "Duo" portable consumer devices from Sony, which combine multiple functions such as image-capture and music playback. Other highlights: a Linux-based handheld computer from Agenda and the $499 Digital Wallet from Minds(at)Work, "a PDA-shaped storage device" with 6GB of memory.

Cnet, reviewing the week’s developments, noted the return of computer industry giants after "an extended absence, as well as the usual posturing on the exhibition floor and keynote stages."

E-mail Surveillance Tool Vindicated

The Chicago law school dean who reviewed the FBI’s controversial e-mail surveillance tool said Monday his report concludes it works the way the bureau described and generally doesn’t ‘‘overcollect" evidence as feared by privacy advocates.

On the eve of the Justice Department’s release of his review findings, Henry H. Perritt Jr., dean of the Illinois Institute of Technology’s Chicago-Kent College of Law, said the report contains recommended improvements to the Carnivore system - both for efficiency and privacy - that likely won’t be made public Tuesday.

‘‘I think that it’s fair to say that it does pretty much what the FBI says it did. For the most part, it does not overcollect. There’s certain recommendations as to how it could be improved," he said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Perritt declined to list the recommendations or how Carnivore sometimes overcollected.

Privacy advocates were alarmed by an FBI lab report last week stating that Carnivore ‘‘could reliably capture and archive all unfiltered traffic to the internal hard drive."

The FBI said that the lab report was the result of a test to determine Carnivore’s ‘‘breaking point," and that laws and court orders restricted Carnivore from being used so broadly. Privacy advocates, however, said the test shows that Carnivore is more powerful than the FBI has stated.

Perritt said the FBI was ‘‘completely open and cooperative" during the review.

Justice spokeswoman Chris Watney said Monday that the Carnivore report was received last week, and will be made available to the public Tuesday.

The intervening days, she said, were needed to black out parts of the report that mention Carnivore’s internal blueprints and other sensitive information. The recommendations probably will be held back as well, Perritt said.

Carnivore was designed by the FBI to collect e-mail going to or from a suspect, in cases where a suspect may be using electronic communications. Privacy experts have worried about the breadth of Carnivore’s capability and its ‘‘black box" nature.

Shortly after IIT was chosen to perform the review, ordered by Attorney General Janet Reno, critics said the review would not be independent because the reviewers were government insiders.

‘‘This important issue deserves a truly independent review, not a whitewash," House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, a longtime Carnivore opponent, said in October.

Perritt advised President Clinton’s transition team on information policy and performing other tasks for the Clinton administration, as well as previous Republican administrations.

Associate Dean Harold J. Krent, another member of the team, worked at the Justice Department in the 1980s, and several team members have current or former security clearances from the Defense Department, Treasury Department or the National Security Agency.

Perritt repeatedly affirmed that he was completely independent, and that his reputation would be damaged if he was anything but impartial.

Most of the nation’s elite academic computer departments - including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Purdue University and the San Diego Supercomputer Center - either declined to review Carnivore or withdrew their applications after objecting to the requirements the Justice Department placed on the review.

The bureau says Carnivore has been used about 25 times, mostly involving national security.

Critics Slam ’Whitewash’ of FBI Email-Tracking Tool

House Republican leader Dick Armey added his voice Wednesday to those accusing an outside review panel of whitewashing a controversial FBI cyber surveillance tool.

‘‘The Department of Justice stacked the deck for this report," said Armey, of Texas, a champion of smaller, less intrusive government. ‘‘It selected reviewers and set the rules in order to ensure they would get the best possible review."

The system, dubbed Carnivore, is used by the FBI to keep court-ordered tabs

on a criminal suspect’s e-mail Mtraffic, Web surfing and instant messages.

Armey and other critics, including civil liberties groups and privacy advocates, have raised concerns about whether the cybersnooping may go beyond court orders and breach the U.S. Constitution’s Fourth Amendment ban on unreasonable searches.

In a draft technical report released Tuesday night, the IIT Research Institute said Carnivore should be fine-tuned to protect routine online communications from interception.

But the institute, tapped by the Justice Department to complete the $175,000 study from a field of 11 vying for the contract, called the computer-based Carnivore system potentially "more effective in protecting privacy and enabling lawful surveillance" than alternatives.

When correctly used, ‘‘it provides investigators with no more information than is permitted by a given court order," said the institute, an arm of the Illinois Institute of Technology.

The seven-member panel that prepared the draft report included several people with strong ties to law enforcement and the Clinton administration, critics have charged.

In his statement, Armey said: ‘‘This important issue deserves a truly independent review, not a whitewash."

Richard Diamond, an Armey spokesman, said the newly elected Congress that takes office in January would continue its oversight of Carnivore.

‘‘We don’t really know who’s going to be running the Department of Justice and that makes a big difference," he added, referring to action under way that will determine whether Republican George W. Bush or Democrat Al Gore wins the White House.

Attorney General Janet Reno ordered an independent review of Carnivore’s inner workings after a stir in Congress.

Assistant Attorney General Stephen Colgate, head of the review panel that will make recommendations to Reno on Carnivore, defended the institute as fully independent and said its draft report demonstrated this.

In addition, the public is welcome to comment on the draft, available at www.usdoj.gov, as a prelude to the institute’s presentation of a final version of its review on Dec. 8, he said in a telephone interview.

Colgate said the institute had also scrutinized a test model of the next version of Carnivore, which ‘‘probably will begin being used shortly after the new year."

Stephen Smith, the IIT Research Institute project manager for the review, said in a telephone interview: ‘‘I would ask people to read the report and decide for themselves if it is fair."

In its report, the institute found inadequate audit trails for pinning down individual accountability for actions taken during use of Carnivore. Colgate said the problem was being addressed in the system’s next version.

He said his panel would make recommendations to Reno on "improvements that need to be made in the system" after taking account of the institute’s

suggestions.

David Sobel of the Electronic Privacy Information Center said nothing in the report released on Tuesday addressed the fundamental legal and constitutional questions surrounding Carnivore.

‘‘The problem with Carnivore is that it gives the FBI access to the communications of hundreds, if not thousands, of innocent Internet users," he said. ‘‘It’s not sufficient for the bureau to say, ’Trust us, we won’t do anything wrong.’ Most users want more of an assurance than that."

The American Civil Liberties Union said the choice of the institute ‘‘guaranteed a pat on the head" to Carnivore.

‘‘This report is, at best, a fuzzy snapshot of Carnivore, and it will be obsolete in two months when the FBI comes out with the next version of Carnivore," ACLU Associate Director Barry Steinhardt said.

Microsoft - Dept of Justice: Back in the Ring

Round One in Microsoft’s fight to avert a breakup is scheduled to begin Monday. Can the company KO the Justice Department in its appeals court rematch?

The opening round in the appeals phase of the Microsoft case gets under way Monday, when the company is scheduled to fire the next salvos in its battle to prevent a breakup.

In a 150-page document, the company will try to convince an appeals court to overturn a lower court ruling that would split the software giant into two parts.

U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson handed the Department of Justice a victory in June when he ruled a breakup was the best remedy for a company that he said had illegally leveraged its monopoly to move into other markets.

Microsoft immediately appealed, and now the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia will decide whether to let Jackson’s ruling stand.

In its opening brief, Microsoft will argue that it didn’t break the law and should not be broken up.

Microsoft is expected to elaborate on many of the arguments from earlier filings, in particular, that it did not prevent Netscape from marketing its Web browser. The assertions probably will mirror earlier arguments that urged a delay of the breakup until the appeal was resolved.

The company maintains Jackson erred in ignoring Microsoft’s arguments that consumers benefited from a free browser. It also argued that the combination of Internet Explorer (IE) and Windows software provided users with features unavailable to them in a non-Microsoft browser.

Microsoft attorneys have relied heavily on one of Judge Jackson’s few rulings in its favor when he said Microsoft’s exclusive deals with PC makers had not kept Netscape from marketing its browser.

The company also will probably cite a previous District of Columbia appeals court ruling overturning Judge Jackson’s order prohibiting Microsoft from bundling IE and Windows.

"How could you say that adding Internet technology wasn’t the right thing to do?" asked Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan.

Still, it appears Microsoft will challenge Jackson’s findings of fact, which declared the company a monopolist.

It’s extremely difficult to get such findings overturned because appeals courts traditionally defer to lower court judges on factual matters and concentrate on legal issues. But Microsoft has repeatedly challenged Jackson’s document in filings and interviews following its release.

Microsoft also is expected to question Judge Jackson’s conduct during the trial.

In past filings, company attorneys have argued that Judge Jackson was biased against Microsoft and that he failed to provide them with an adequate arena to present their case. They’ve also accused Jackson of mishandling the case and applying antitrust laws too broadly.

Once Microsoft files its brief, the DOJ has until Jan. 12 to respond.

Microsoft then has another chance to reply. However, the two sides are not scheduled to meet in court until Feb. 26 and 27, when attorneys are scheduled to present oral arguments.

Usually, only three jurists hear appeals. But, in this case, the court already has agreed to hear arguments with a full panel of judges present. Some legal experts think Microsoft has a better chance with the full panel since most of the judges are conservative.

The appeals court had considered calling in a technical expert to explain some computing basics to the judges, but that plan was scrapped in response to criticism from both sides.

The court is accepting friend-of-the-court briefs from parties with stakes in the case, however. Microsoft supporters, including the Association for Competitive Technology, are also subject to the Monday deadline. Supporters of the Department of Justice decision, including America Online Inc. (NYSE:AOL - news) and the Software and Information Industry Association, have until Jan. 12 to file their briefs.

Even with an expedited schedule, the Microsoft case has dragged on for years.

It was first filed in May of 1998. After months of sometimes-lively testimony from Microsoft employees and foes, Jackson issued his searing findings of fact -- which called Microsoft an abusive monopolist -- in November 1999. In June, after settlement talks fell through, Jackson ordered Microsoft to be split into two companies, one that would sell operating systems, the other devoted to applications and Internet services.

Apple Told Resellers: "No Stores"

A senior Apple Computer executive told Mac resellers less than a month ago that the company had no plans to open retail stores in the near future, said a dealer who attended the meeting. Apple now appears to be going ahead with such plans, according to a report in Friday's San Jose Mercury News (see " Apple to launch first retail site").

Tom Santos, general manager of Macadam, a San Francisco Apple reseller, told MacWEEK that he attended an October 23 meeting of Apple Specialist store managers in which Tim Cook, Apple's senior vice president of worldwide operations, assured attendees that the company would not open retail stores.

"The impression from the October meeting was that Tim Cook is a nice guy that (Apple CEO) Steve (Jobs) was listening to. And now that appears not to be the case," Santos said.

Another company that attended the meeting was ComputerWare, a Northern California Mac-only reseller--and member of Apple's Dealer Advisory board--with a location about five minutes away from a proposed Apple retail site in downtown Palo Alto, Calif.

"If I was ComputerWare, I'd be pissed," Santos said. A ComputerWare spokesman declined to comment on the newspaper report, as did an Apple spokeswoman. Santos said that he had not received any official word from Apple about a retail chain.

The October meeting was not the first time that Apple has pledged to stay out of the brick-and-mortar retail business, Santos said. In November 1999, he said, Mitch Mandich, then senior vice president of worldwide sales, told resellers that it would be "years" before Apple opened any stores. Mandich has since left the company.

The San Jose Mercury News, citing Palo Alto city officials, reported on Friday that Apple will open its first location in that city's downtown, a few miles from Jobs' home. The newspaper apparently learned of the project through the Palo Alto architectural review board, which saw a preview of the store's design. Palo Alto officials told the newspaper that Apple plans to open two other stores in California, one of them in Glendale, near Los Angeles, and that Apple may have a simultaneous grand opening for all three.

Santos said he was not afraid of the prospect of competing with Apple for retail customers. "If Apple's stores compete on a level playing field, they don't have a chance," he said. "Apple doesn't understand what its dealers do. Retail is not just about moving boxes, it's about product knowledge, knowing the customer's needs and service, including support for older models," he said.

He added that Apple will be hard-pressed to staff its stores with Mac-savvy employees. "I challenge any employee they would hire to match the knowledge that our employees have," he said. "When a customer goes into one of their stores with questions about their Mac IIci, the knowledge and background just won't be there."

Apple to Launch First Retail Site

The San Jose Mercury News, citing Palo Alto city officials, reported in Friday’s edition that Apple Computer will open its first retail store in downtown Palo Alto, and may have two other California locations in the works. The 6,500-square-foot facility, just a few miles from the home of CEO Steve Jobs, would be a prototype for Apple stores in other areas, the newspaper reported. Apple representatives declined to comment, stating that "nothing has been publicly announced."

The Mercury News reported that the store will be located in the former HomeChef site at University and Kipling avenues in Palo Alto, and may be open as late as 11 p.m.

Apple would appear to be following the example of Gateway, which has a chain of 315 Gateway Country stores in the U.S.

The newspaper apparently learned of the project through the Palo Alto architectural review board, which saw a preview of the store’s design. The building will reportedly feature "two white Apple logos illuminated on glass doors."

"People are really excited about it," one board member told the newspaper, "because it’s going to open late at night and computer freaks can wander in and try the equipment."

Palo Alto officials told the newspaper that Apple plans to open two other stores in California, one of them in Glendale, near Los Angeles. Apple may have a simultaneous grand opening for all three.

One group that’s sure to be unhappy about the prospect of Apple-owned retail outlets is Mac resellers, some of whom have already complained about thin profit margins and competition with the company’s online store. But the move should not come as a surprise: The Wall Street Journal reported in September that Apple was considering an entry into brick-and-mortar retailing (see " Apple to open retail chain?"). Apple, of course, has been looking for ways to boost hardware sales after a disappointing fourth-quarter earnings report caused an implosion in its stock price.

Intel Introduces Pentium 4 Chip

Intel Corp. on Monday introduced its speedy Pentium 4 processor, the first new desktop processor design from the world’s largest chipmaker since the Pentium Pro processor in 1995.

The company said the Pentium 4 operates at speeds of 1.5 and 1.4 gigahertz, with room for achieving higher speeds in the future. Analysts say the new chip -- the ‘‘brain" of a personal computer -- should be able to reach speeds of 10 gigahertz or so in five years, about 10 times faster than the latest Pentium III.

Targeted mainly at Internet technologies, the latest chip provides better graphics, video and multimedia performance than its predecessors and features what Intel calls its Rapid Execution Engine, which runs certain frequently operated instructions at double the core clock speed of the chip.

It is priced at $819 and $644 each for the 1.5 and 1.4 gigahertz chips, respectively, in 1,000-unit quantities, Intel said.

One of the biggest advances from the Pentium III, analysts said, is the Pentium 4's 400 megahertz bus, which far outstrips the speed of the current 133 megahertz bus. The bus transfers data between the processor and main memory, and a faster bus would give better video, audio and three-dimensional graphics.

The Pentium 4, based on commonly used benchmarks in the industry, performs video encoding 47 percent faster than a 1 gigahertz Pentium III chip and performance in gaming is faster, too -- some 44 percent faster on Quake III Arena, a popular computer game, Intel said.

With 42 million transistors -- 50 percent more than Intel's Pentium III -- and a size that's twice as big as its predecessor, some analysts say, the Pentium 4 could cause problems for Intel when it cranks up production to millions of units.

Intel has had a couple of manufacturing misfires this year, one with a processor and another with a chipset, a device containing the guts of a PC.

Concurrent with the official launch of the chip on Monday morning, major PC makers including Compaq Computer Corp. and Gateway Inc. unveiled Pentium 4-packing PCs for sale for about $2,000.

Cubase VST 5.0 Out in Germany, Coming to US Dec. 5

Cubase VST 5.0 from Steinberg Media Technologies is now shipping in Germany. The software will begin shipping in the United States on December 5th.

Cubase VST 5.0 is Steinberg's music creation and production system for the Macintosh -- it provides high-res MIDI recording with audio recording in 16 or 24-bit formats. The software features a plug-in architecture that sports what Steinberg bills as "the world's largest range of add-on realtime audio effects."

The Cubase VST 5.0 Series for the Mac boasts a complete graphic makeover along with features that enhance Cubase's usability and sound quality, including analog "warmth" with Magneto technology and 32-bit recording, output and mixdown in Cubase VST/32. Plus, the Cubase 5.0 series is optimized for Power Mac G4 with Velocity Engine for speedy audio processing.

With the arrival of the new dual processor Macs, not only have multi-processors arrived on standard machines; the latest OS supports it in a new and more comprehensive way. And Steinberg uses this new functionality to greatly increase the amount of power available to the VST audio engine.

All three products in the Cubase series -- Cubase VST, Cubase VST Score or Cubase VST/32 -- share Cubase's digital recording engine and have scalable recording modes with up to 32-bit floating point resolution in the top-of-the-range Cubase VST/32. This level of quality delivers unbelievable headroom allowing for dynamic performances to be captured without having to resort to compression, according to Rodney Orpheus, Internet systems director for Steinberg.

Recording in 96 kHz and equipped with Apogee’s UV 22, the world’s best dithering technology, the VST/32 offers extreme dynamic response and transparent sounds all the way down to mastering. Cubase VST/32 has 128 channels of digital audio, eight FX (special effects) sends, four channel inserts each and four master inserts.

Cubase VST/32 5.0 features several new technologies, including TrueTape Mode. Now recordings can add that ineffable analog quality with Steinberg’s Magneto Tape Saturation technology. Another sound color to experiment with, TrueTape can pump tape-compression-like characteristics into any audio track, lending heavy analog power to "fat" guitars or pumping drums.

"With version 5.0 musicians can ’go into the red’," Orpheus says. "This when tape is saturated with, well, warmth. It’s the trait lacking in digital producing that can make it feel cool, less warm. But now you can get the closest possible to analog warmth. It’s a unique feature to Cubase VST/32 5.0 and it results in music that sounds phenomenally good."

The update also features LTB (Linear Time Base) technology from Steinberg that provides more precise MIDI timing. When used with the new Midex 8 USB MIDI Interface, Cubase VST 5.0 offers accuracy of down to 300 microseconds, guaranteeing the steadiest MIDI groove in town, Orpheus says.

The Midex 8 USB MIDI interface can be used as a single unit supplied by your Mac’s USB port. Or it can be "stacked" in multiple units, which are powered by external power (in other words, you plug ’em in separately). And the devices will work with just about any power supply, which is great for traveling musicians.

The handling of FX and plug-ins within the program has been completely redesigned, emphasizing ease of use. The new FX-rack hosts new control elements and the new channel EQs can now either be edited graphically or with the familiar virtual pots. There are now 40 new plug-ins that come with the product line. And all can be triggered automatically with the timing of your computer.

Cubase VST 5.0 also comes with:

* InWire Studio, the protocol for the real-time Internet studio network. When users launch Cubase VST 5.0 they have entered a worldwide recording studio. With the help of Rocket Network’s Internet technology, Cubase VST 5.0 users can meet in private or public studios for online collaboration.

* Universal Sound Module, an instrument for writing and jamming with others. USM is the new virtual sound module with over 70MB of sounds with general MIDI compatibility.

* The new MIDI Track Mixer, which offers VST-style control over any connected MIDI gear. Cubase VST 5.0’s editing resolution of up to 15380 ppq coupled with the new Groove Control browser allows for real-time, precise positioning of audio events.

* Custom Window Sets, which lets users save their favorite work mode, including the position of their windows and settings. Users can then recall a saved Window Set either through menu or key commands.

* Track Folders, in which users can put an infinite number of MIDI or audio tracks. The folder can be flipped shut, showing just the overview of its contents, and stashed out of the way. Track Folders can also be nested.

* Drag and drop capability, which enhances the handling of musical elements. Single notes, phrases, parts, groups of parts or even entire ranges can be selected, moved or copied from window to window within the program or even to the desktop.

Also, Mac OS X support is planned.

Time Warner Reaches Earthlink Deal

Time Warner, striking a deal vital to its proposed merger with America Online, agreed Monday to carry AOL's chief Internet service rival, EarthLink, on its high-speed cable systems.

Time Warner's arrangement with EarthLink could satisfy antitrust regulators reviewing the merger, who had demanded that Time Warner offer an Internet provider besides AOL before the merger can close.

The Federal Trade Commission now will consider the EarthLink deal in its ongoing merger review, extending the deadline for its decision to mid-December. The merger also awaits evaluation at the Federal Communications Commission.

''This is probably the single best news for the companies' merger outlook in the last few months," said Scott Cleland, an analyst with The Precursor Group. ''If EarthLink is happy with its access, the FTC is very likely to be happy with the agreement."

The deal means that subscribers to Time Warner's high-speed Web service delivered over cable lines will have two choices - EarthLink and AOL - for their online provider. EarthLink is the nation's No. 2 Internet provider.

The EarthLink arrangement won't take effect until the AOL Time Warner merger closes, which the companies now expect to happen late this year or early next year. Time Warner also must complete its negotiations to restructure an exclusive contract it currently has with Internet provider Road Runner before it can offer any other service.

But the agreement with EarthLink addresses a key government concern about the merger shutting out competition.

Time Warner delivers high-speed access over its cable lines that potentially could serve about 20 million U.S. homes, and AOL is the nation's largest Internet provider with 25 million customers.

The FTC wants assurances that other Internet providers, like EarthLink or Microsoft's MSN service, also can strike fair deals to be offered on Time Warner's cable systems.

The goal is to give consumers several options for choosing an Internet provider in the high-speed world - a choice they already enjoy with traditional telephone-line connections.

EarthLink had previously complained about the condition and prices set by Time Warner. Experts said that regulatory pressure helped Time Warner offer EarthLink an acceptable deal, although the companies would not disclose specifics of their arrangement Monday.

‘‘Time Warner had 99 percent of the clout in that negotiation without government involvement," Cleland said.

EarthLink officials said Monday they were pleased with the Time Warner agreement, which ensures their service will be marketed and sold the same as AOL’s service. EarthLink will be offered at the same time, or before, any other Internet provider including AOL.

‘‘We really think that this agreement addresses the issues that are of concern to the FTC," said Dave Baker, vice president of law and public policy for EarthLink, which has 4.6 million subscribers

Time Warner said the EarthLink deal could pave the way for relationships with other Internet providers. The company already is in talks with Juno Online Services, the nation’s third largest Internet provider.

‘‘We believe it will serve as a model for future broadband agreements between (Internet service providers) and cable companies across the country," said Glenn A. Britt, president of Time Warner Cable.

Gene Kimmelman of Consumer Union called the deal a good first step. But, he warned, ‘‘we still don’t know how this will be more broadly applied to other Internet service providers."

Album of the Year? Spin Mag’s Choice Isn’t Human

Fittingly for an industry currently dominated by the controversy over downloadable music technology, Spin magazine’s album of the year is ‘‘your hard drive."

In a nod to Time magazine’s naming ‘‘The Computer" its ‘‘Man of the Year" in 1982, Spin chose an inanimate object for one of the top honors in its ‘‘Year in Music" issue which hits newsstands on Dec. 5.

‘‘Honors for 2000 Album of the Year go to your hard drive," the music and youth culture magazine said in a release on Friday.

‘‘The digital download proved so revolutionary, it will have a longer legacy than any single piece of music released in 2000," it said. ‘‘What industry-sanctioned album could compete with 20 million Napster users collaborating on the greatest mix tape never sold?"

The song-swapping service Napster, whose software allows Internet users to download music from other users’ computer files, is being sued by the world’s five largest record labels who claim it violates copyright laws. Napster denies the charge and one of the labels, Bertelsmann’s BMG, has agreed to drop the suit if Napster develops a membership-driven service that compensates copyright holders.

In naming the computer hard drive, Spin acknowledged what millions of teenagers and college students with little money to spend on CDs already know -- that Internet song-swapping services like Napster are cool.

‘‘This year, you didn’t have to wait for a label to release that record you’d been longing for," said Spin. ‘‘Downloading challenged our definition of the album as a self-contained work and our role as fans like no single record ever could."

The magazine did, however, choose humans in its other main categories. Rapper Eminem was named Artist of the Year and won Single of the Year for ‘‘The Real Slim Shady." Spin also named "anti-rock pioneers" Radiohead as Band of the Year.

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